

Summary of the QPSU Council meeting
27 May 2008

QPSU Council met on Tuesday 27 May 2008. 131 delegates were in attendance, plus observers. Council met at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Brisbane.

Climate Change

Council met following the conclusion of the Union's Annual General Meeting, where Greg Withers addressed the meeting on the Queensland government's response to climate change and how Climate Heroes could contribute to this process.

Mr Withers acknowledged the work that QPSU Climate Heroes have done in helping to make their workplaces more sustainable, and committed to working with QPSU to help reduce the Queensland government's carbon footprint. He also welcomed suggestions and input from QPSU members on how to make state government operations more sustainable.

During the Council meeting proper, delegates discussed the formation of a comprehensive climate change policy for the QPSU. With the support of both Executive and Council, the policy will be referred to the Climate Change Committee for development and eventual approval by council delegates.

Core Enterprise Bargaining agreement

Council discussed preparation for the next Enterprise Bargaining agreement (EB) covering the core public service. A date of 4 March 2009 was set for a delegates conference which would discuss the Core EB and related agreements. It was agreed that the union would enter into negotiations with the government about the structure of the proposed agreement and which areas would be covered versus which would be separate agreements. A deadline for these negotiations was set for 31 December 2008.

The government's proposal to negotiate via Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) was also discussed. Council determined to agree to IBB negotiations with the government over the issues of: the impact on superannuation on the operative date of EB's being 1 August; recruitment and selection processes; discipline and investigation procedures; grievances; appeals mechanisms, and restructures.

It was resolved that QPSU delegates would be responsible for developing processes around the structuring of the EB, and whether their areas would be included as part of the Core EB.

Agency planning was also discussed, with delegates to prepare materials on issues specific to their agencies, so that a final position on these issues can be developed at the delegates conference in March 2009.

Federal Industrial Relations

General Secretary Alex Scott briefed delegates on recent developments in the federal industrial relations sphere. Mr Scott explained that it now seems likely that the new federal government's planned IR framework to replace the WorkChoices legislation will include as a component the voluntary referral of areas of state industrial relations coverage to the federal government, as has previously happened in Victoria.

Mr Scott said there was a very real possibility that the state governments could agree to such a handover.

Mr Scott said that the QPSU's federal counterpart union, the SPSF, was developing a policy framework to ensure that workers do not lose entitlements under any proposed referral. Council then endorsed a lengthy motion from the SPSF which enumerated the necessary conditions so that workers do not lose any of their entitlements in any transfer from state to federal IR systems.

New Public Sector Tribunal

The state government has announced its plans to amend the Public Service Act. One of the most significant changes for QPSU members to come out of this amendment is the creation of a new appeals tribunal. Council delegates discussed the problems with the existing Office of the Public Service Commissioner, how the processes offer little in the way of procedural justice to workers, as well as various questions about how the new proposed system would operate. It was indicated that although there were uncertainties in relation to the new body, this amendment at least gave some opportunity for an improvement on the current inadequate system.

Council passed a motion expressing support for the transfer of the OPSC appeals function to the Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal. In the view of delegates this offered an opportunity for a more professional, arms-length appeals process.

New Brisbane Premises

Council discussed the purchase of a new building to act as the union's Brisbane headquarters. It was indicated that Finance Committee has recommended that the Union continue leasing premises for the short term, until a suitable building site for purchase becomes available.

Order of Business

After some discussion, Council agreed to change the order of business for its meetings, in accordance with the proposed amendment to the union's by-laws as published in the most recent edition of *Public Sector Voice*.